Following Jesus.

Wed. Dec 9, 1936

What it Means to Follow Jesus.

+ Jn. 1:43 "Follow me".

Intro. Where, when & how does one find his religion?

Some find their religion in their homes.
Others find " " by searching for it.

Where one sincerely holds religious convictions which shape character & determine the course of life - he has religion.

I. We may find religion the same way the disciples found it.

1. The disciples followed ~~Christ~~ Jesus.
   Jesus became their Leader, Teacher and example.
   The disciples became his pupils & apprentices and found a religion to live by.

~~2~~ The disciples were Christians - they belonged to ~~Jesus~~ Christ.

2. To be a Christian is to be a follower of Jesus Christ - a pupil in his school, an apprentice in his way of living:

a - Suppose it were necessary in order to be a Christian
   fully to understand God & man & life?
   to assent to the one true creed?
   to observe the right ceremony?
   to attain a certain specified character?
   Who could be Christian?

The difference between one who has the Xn religion & the one who has not is that the one recognizes Jesus Christ as his religious leader while the other does not.

2) b – The following of leaders is the genius of society

Children follow parents & teachers, then some hero, then one leader or another, one group or another.

The question is, do we follow Jesus as our spiritual leader? If we do, we are Christians and have a religion to live by.

With us in America it is either Xty or no religion ∴ the practical question is, "Do I acknowlege Jesus as a trustworthy religious guide whom I propose to follow? If I do, I am a Christian.

II. From the start the disciples had a religion to live by.

1. Their following Jesus became their religion.

Jesus did not ask them to sign a creed or be baptized – he simply asked them to follow him. These came later, & however important they may be – they are secondary.

Jesus did not ask Peter how good he was, or whether he could refrain from swearing & lying. What he did ask was that the disciples should become his pupils, and learn of him; his apprentices in his way of living.

2. Exactly the same thing is true of us.

We determine our lives by the teachings of Jesus & by his way of living, and thereby have a religion to live by.

3) We cannot leave our daily rounds & go with Jesus as did the disciples, for he is no longer with us in the flesh.

But the four Gospels, however incomplete they may be, give us an adequate presentation of Jesus - his teachings, ~~his life~~ ~~his~~ his works and example, his life & death & his Spirit, so that we have his principles to live by, and his ways to follow.

Here are some of the paths he invites us to travel:

(1) The forsaking of evil ways
(2) Strenuous pursuit of what we know to be right & good.
(3) Recognition of the supreme claims of God.
(4) The love of neighbor as of oneself.
(5) The study of the scriptures
(6) Response to the noblest spiritual impulses
(7) The practice of sincere prayer
(8) Faithfulness in public worship
(9) Testimony concerning him to our loved ones & friends & neighbors & to the ends of the earth.
(10) Unselfish service to all in need.

When we accept Jesus as our Guide & Teacher we have in these things a religion by which to live.

III. The disciples found more & more religion from day to day.

1. Where Jesus went they went together, they listened to what he said, and all that he did was lessons to them. They absorbed his spirit

and in the things he gave them to do they found practice in a growing religion.

They made mistakes, they did not fully understand him & at times their conduct was occasion for reproach; but they followed Jesus – they were christians.

2. We are to follow a similar process.

The N. T. gives us all the necessary directions to follow Jesus. His very spirit breathes in the record of his life, teachings and death.

There too, we may contact the spirit of Jesus as it breathes in Christlike souls.

(My own mother)

And also the Church helps us to contact Jesus and understand his ways more fully. (we, too, may not understand, stumble & fall) (grades & lessons in school)

Christ gives us a religion to live by that grows from day to day as we learn the lessons of life in his school and as we practice them in our daily lives.

IV. The disciples continued to find religion after Jesus' death.

1. The disciples came to a fuller understanding of Jesus after his death than they had before. The Spirit of Truth whom Jesus had promised would come to them, now led them to understand God in Christ thru his very death on the cross. There these disciples received power to go forth & live & preach the gospel in all the world.

5) We, too, have the Spirit of Truth to lead us on and on into a ~~f~~ more complete understanding of Christ & his Kingdom, of God & man.

In Christ every truth which comes to us from whatever source is an addition to our religion. It means that God is revealing Himself to us in every new discovery. There is nothing that is known to be true which may not clarify & illume our religion.

Thus our Xn religion may develop as naturally as do all forms of life. We are ever seeking to know more about God & Man. And while we are seeking, we are practising what we do know, and by doing the will of God in Christ, we come to know more.

Conclusion

Xns grow strong thru practice & experience.

Following X begets Xn character.
We cannot judge whether a man is a Xn by his character
Man of high ch. may be headed away fr X.
" " low " " " going with X.

"This a beginning – more to follow – "Sensing Spiritual Realities"."